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Order labels are printed in heavy-faced capitals followed by the number of the order. This is pasted on the center of the flap. If the order is entirely exotic, the label is printed in red ink. The same color is used for foreign genera, as described below. This device saves a large amount of time when one is looking over the shelves for American plants.

The genus labels are of two kinds, one for the shelf-flaps the other for the genus covers themselves, both printed in heavy-faced type.

The shelf flap genus labels consist of the name of the genus preceded by its consecutive number in Durand, and followed by its number in the order to which it belongs, thus:

4742. *Asclepias*. 63.

These labels are pasted one below another in their numerical order, beginning at the upper left corner of the flap. As the name and number of the order are already on the flap, it is considered unnecessary and undesirable that they be printed with the name of each genus. The authority for the genus is also considered entirely unnecessary. If the genus is wholly exotic, or is large, and one or more shelves contain only exotic species, their labels are printed in red.

The genus-cover labels, which are pasted on the lower left corner of the genus cover, contain the name of the genus, with the number of its order below, and its consecutive number still lower, thus:—

Asclepias

Order. 116

4742.

This form of label enables one to know precisely to what place to return a bundle of specimens which has been taken from the shelves. The number of the order is inserted as being often desirable. If any genus-cover contains entirely foreign species its label is printed in red.

In this system but few complexities occur. Perhaps the least rare are those cases in which a genus in Durand is treated by American authorities as two or more genera. When this occurs the American generic names are adopted, using in parenthesis, the numbers of the genus to which Durand refers the American genera.

The use of Durand's Index seemed at first to be objectionable for the reason that the *Genera Plantarum*, which must of necessity be the more used of the two works, had a different numbering. This difficulty has been removed by simply renumbering our copy with ink.

This is to be done also with our copies of Gray's *Synoptical Flora*.—
FREDERICK V. COVILLE, *Assistant Botanist, U. S. Department of Agriculture*

Penicillium and corrosive sublimate.—*Penicillium* has a way of upsetting all "facts" with regard to the habitat of fungi. Dr. J. N. Hurty, of Indianapolis, has sent to the writer a flour paste which he prepares and which contains a considerable amount of mercuric chloride, completely

covered by a rank growth of *Penicillium glaucum*. When asked for the percentage of corrosive sublimate, Dr. Hurty could not give it quantitatively, but furnished the following statement: "Our paste pot holds one pint, and to one-half this quantity one or two fluid drachms of a saturated solution of the poison was added. One drachm of saturated solution added to one-half pint would be about 1 part in 900. The paste always had a strong metallic, corrosive taste, and showed quantitatively that mercuric chloride was present in pronounced amount."

Dr. Farlow was kind enough to examine and confirm the specific nature of the fungus.—JOHN M. COULTER, *Crawfordsville, Ind.*

EDITORIAL.

WE FEAR that the recent proposition to give names to all the minor variations and forms of plants, cultivated or wild, will precipitate us into such a miry slough of nomenclature that we shall never escape. The proposition has a good end in view, and we are in hearty sympathy with the purpose of recording the variations to which plants are subject. The manner in which this is to be carried out, however, is of the utmost importance. If every one who comes across a plant whose leaves do not quite accord with the description of the species is to rush into print in the nearest journal with a description of "*forma lanceolata*" or "*subforma terrestris*," we shall ere long have to cry, "Hold! enough!" The process for the recording of variations must be the same as for revising the species of a genus. If some particular species is suspected of being variable, a large number of specimens, with full data of collection, must be obtained and carefully studied. Only prolonged study and abundant material will enable any respectable opinion to be formed.

In our judgment the time is hardly ripe here for this study. There remains yet too much land to be possessed. In England and western Europe protracted study of the flora has fairly exhausted the species, and some are ready to turn to varieties and forms. Here a vast amount of work is to be done in collecting and *properly* describing species.

PROPERLY DESCRIBING species has been too little heeded by those who have dealt with North American plants, particularly the cryptogams. Mischievous species-making is a greater evil even than the violation of the law of priority, for the intent of the author who uses a too-modern name can usually be ascertained; but he who imperfectly describes a species often puzzles generations.

In three ways the soul of the righteous conservative systematist is vexed. First, by too brief descriptions. One can hardly pick up a number of *Grevillea* without being struck by the absurdly condensed diagno-